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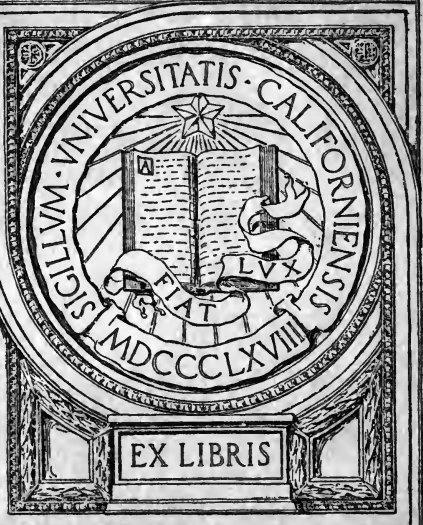
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GREEK FOLKLORE.

On the Breaking of Vessels as a Funeral Rite in
Modern Greece.

Translated from the Original of

N. G. POLITIS,

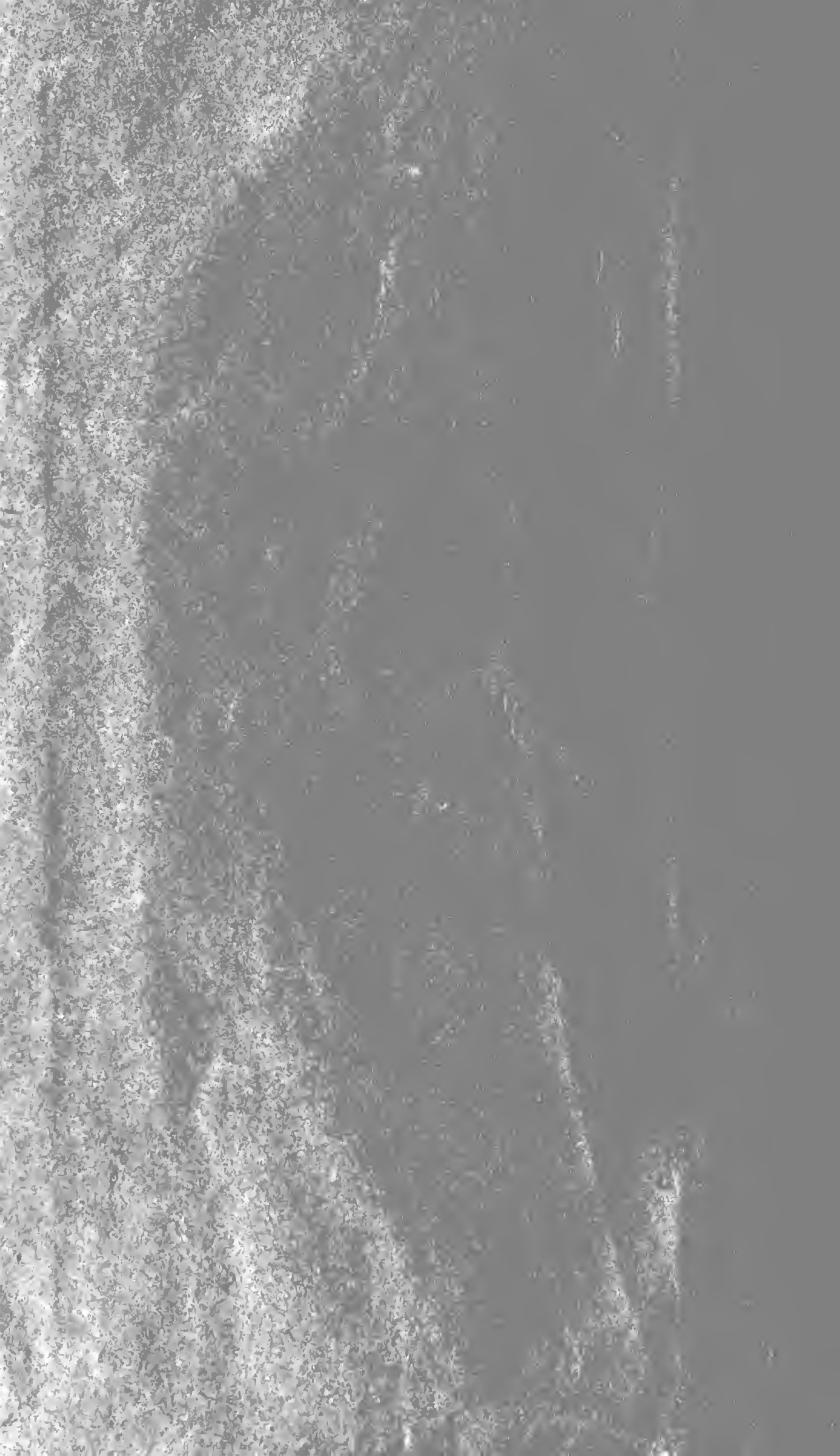
Professor of the University of Athens.

BY

LOUIS DYER.

LONDON:
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ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΛΑΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ

Περὶ τῆς θραύσεως ἀγγείων κατὰ τὴν κηδείαν.

Τὸ καὶ πολλοῖς ἄλλοις λαοῖς ἔθιμον τῆς θραύσεως παρὰ τοὺς τάφους ἀγγείων, ἀφιερομένων εἰς τοὺς νεκροὺς ἢ εἰς τὴν κηδείαν χρῆσμευσάντων, τηρεῖται καὶ παρὰ τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἑλληνικῷ λαῷ, κατάλοιπον κατὰ πᾶσαν πιθανότητα ὄν τῆς ἀποτάτης ἀρχαιότητος. Διότι διὰ τοῦ ἔθιμου τούτου δύναται νὰ ἐξηγηθῇ ἡ εὕρεσις θραυσμάτων κεραμείων ἀγγείων ἐν τῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνωτάτου ἀνοίγματος τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου Χ. Τσοῦντα ἀνασκαφθέντων Μυκηναίων τάφων. σχηματισμένῳ βάθρῳ, τῷ πρωπριομένῳ ἴσως εἰς χοᾶς¹, καθὼς ἐπίσης καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι τῶν κεραμίων σωροὶ ἐν τῇ ἀρχαίᾳ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ, ἥς αἱ πρὸς ἀνατολὰς καὶ μεσεμβρίαν τῆς νεωτέρας πόλεως ἀνωφέρειαι καὶ οἱ βουνοὶ συνίστανται ἀποκλειστικῶς ἀπὸ τῆς κορυφῆς μέχρι τοῦ εἰς βάθος 8—16 καὶ πλειόνων μέτρων ἀρχικοῦ ἐδάφους ἐκ στρωμάτων τεθραυσμένων κεράμων Αἰγυπτιακῶν, Ῥωμαικῶν καὶ Ἑλληνικῶν διαφόρων ἐποχῶν, ἀπὸ τῆς κτίσεως τῆς πόλεως ὑπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου μέχρι τῆς ἀλώσεως αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀράβων². Οὗτος δὲ κατὰ τινὰς εἶναι ὁ λόγος δι' ὃν ἐνίοτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς ἀρχαιοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς τάφοις εὐρισκόμενα ληκύθια ἔχουσιν ἀποκεκρουσμένον τὸν πυθμένα³, καὶ πολλὰ καθόλου τῶν κτερισμάτων φέρουσι τὰ ἴχνη ἐπίτηδες ἐπενεχθείσης αὐτοῖς βλάβης ἐν τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς τάφοις⁴, καὶ ἐν προϊστορικοῖς τῆς βορείου Εὐρώπης⁵.

¹ Βλ. Che. Belger, ἐν *Berliner philol. Wochenschrift*, 1891 (col. 707).

² Τ. Νεροῦτσος, Κεραμίων λαβαὶ ἐνεπιγράφοι, ἀνευρισκόμεναι ἐν τῇ ἀρχαίᾳ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ, σ. 3 κέ. καὶ ἐν Ἀθηναίῳ (περιοδικῷ συγγράμματι Ἀθηνῶν), 1874, τ. jii, σ. 215 κέ.

³ Hermann-Blümner, *Griechische-Privatalterthümer*, 1882, σ. 380.

⁴ Hermann-Blümner, *ibid.*

⁵ O. Clausen, ἐν: *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie &c.*, 1892, σ. 166 κέ.—Νῦν ἐν Ἑλλάδι σχίζουσι τὰ συνθαπτόμενα τῷ νέκρῳ ἐνδύματα καὶ ὑφάσματα· ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἔθους τούτου λόγος φέρεται ἢ

GREEK FOLKLORE.

*On the BREAKING of VESSELS as a FUNERAL RITE in
MODERN GREECE.*

Translated from the original of N. G. POLITIS, Professor at the University of Athens, by LOUIS DYER.

THE custom in question obtains among many peoples besides our own, and elsewhere as in Greece is probably a survival from the very remotest antiquity. Vessels either especially dedicated to the deceased or else having been used in the funeral-rites are broken at the grave. This custom may explain the discovery of fragments of vases on the raised-step (*Báθρον*) at the upper opening of the tombs excavated at Mycenae by Mr. Ch. Tsountas. Certainly libations could naturally and properly be made at this step.¹ Perhaps the same explanation accounts for the huge heaps of potsherds at Old Alexandria, where, east and south of the modern city there are mounds consisting exclusively,—down to a depth which ranges between 8 and 16 metres,—of Greek, Egyptian, and Roman potsherds belonging to various epochs and deposited in successive layers beginning with its foundation by Alexander and ending with its capture by the Arabs.² This rite, requiring as it did the fracture of ritual vessels, serves to account—as some think—for the numerous *lecythi* with their bottoms broken away which are found in ancient Greek tombs,³ for this reason, too, most funeral offerings, both in the tombs of Greece,⁴ and in those of prehistoric Europe⁵ bear unmistakable marks of intentional mutilation of some kind.

¹ See Chr. Belger in the *Berliner Philologische Wochenschrift*, 1891 (col. 707).

² T. Neroutsos, *Inscribed handles of vases found at Old Alexandria*, p. 3 ff. See also the *Athenaion*, an Athenian periodical, 1874, vol. iii, p. 215 ff.

³ Herrmann-Blümner, *Griechische Privatalterthümer*, 1882, p. 380.

⁴ Herrmann-Blümner, *op. cit.*

⁵ Olshausen, *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, &c.*, 1892, p. 166 ff. To-day, in Greece, they cut all the clothes and wrappings of the dead, but the current reason given is that this is done to guard against depredations from the riflers of tombs, and there is no reason for going farther afield to account for it.

Ἐν Ἑλλάδι νῦν θραύονται πήλινα ἀγγεῖα ἐπὶ τοῦ τάφου καὶ πρὸ τῆς οἰκίας, κατὰ τὴν ἔξοδον τοῦ νεκροῦ, ἐνιαχοῦ δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν, ἣν διέρχεται ἡ ἐπικήδειος πομπή. Ἀπανταχοῦ σχεδὸν τῆς Ἑλλάδος, καθ' ἣν στιγμὴν οἱ νεκροθάπται καταβιβάζουσι τὸν νεκρὸν, ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐκφωνῶν τὸ γραφικόν: Γῆ εἶ καὶ εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύσῃ¹, ἐπιχέει ἐπὶ τοῦ τάφου ὀλίγον ὕδωρ ἐκ λαγίνου πρὸς τοῦτο κομιζομένης, ἥτις πάραυτα θραύεται καὶ βάλλει θράκα χώματος· ὁμοίως καὶ οἱ παριστάμενοι εἰς τὸν ἑνταφιασμὸν νομίζουσι θρησκευτικὸν καθῆκον νὰ ρίψωσι χῶμα ἐπὶ τοῦ νεκροῦ, ἐμφωνοῦντες: Θιὸς σχωρέσ' τον, ἐπόμενοι οὕτως ἀνέπιγνώστως τῷ παλαιωτάτῳ Ἑλληνικῷ νόμῳ τῷ κελεύοντι τοῖς περιτυχοῦσιν ἀτάφῳ σώματι ἐπβάλλειν αὐτῷ γῆν². Εἶναι δ' ἄξιον παρατηρήσεως οἷς ἡ τοιαύτη ἱεροτελεστία ἦν οὐδεὶς Ἑλληὴν ἱερεὺς παραλείπει κατὰ τὸν ἑνταφιασμὸν, δὲν κυρώθῃ ἰπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, διότι οὐδεμία αὐτῆς μνεία γίνεταί ἐν τῇ νεκρωσίμῳ ἀκολουθίᾳ³.

Ὁ Κύριος Edward Tylor ὅστις μετὰ θαυμαστῆς πολυμαθείας κατέδεξε τὴν ὑπαρξίν παραπλησίων ἐθίμων παρὰ λαοῖς τῆς Ἀσίας, τῆς Ἀφρικῆς, τῆς Ἀμερικῆς, τῆς Αὐστραλίας, ἐπφέρει πολλὰς εὐφυεῖς εἰκασίας περὶ τῶν δοξασιῶν αἵτινες παρέσχον ἀφορμὴν εἰς τὴν γένεσιν τῶν ἐθίμων ἐκείνων⁴. Παρ' ἡμῶν δ' οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ τῶν λαϊκῶν οἱ λογιώτεροι, ἐφωτώμενοι περὶ τῆς ἔννοιαι τοῦ ἐθίμου, ὅπερ ὑπολαμβάνουσι θρησκευτικὸν νόμιμον, ἀποκρίνονται ὅτι εἶναι συμβολικὴ παράστασις τῆς διαλύσεως τοῦ ἀψύχου σώματος εἰς τὰ στοιχεῖα, ἐξ ὧν εἶναι συντεθεμένον, τὴν γῆν καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ. Ἡ ἀληθὴς ὁμῶς ἔννοια αὐτοῦ εἶναι δυνατὸν νομίζομεν νὰ ἀνευρέθῃ διὰ

προφύλαξις ἀπὸ τῆς ἱεροσυλίας τῶν τυμβορῶν οὐδεμία δ' ἀνάγκη ὑπάρχει ν' ἀναζητήσωμεν ἄλλον.

¹ Γέν. iii. 19.

² Βλ. πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις Αἰλιανόν, Ποικ. ἱστ. v. 14.

³ Καθ' ὅσον γινώσκομεν μόνον ἐν Γορτυνίᾳ τῆς Πελοποννήσου τηρεῖται μὲν ἡ ἄλλη ἱεροτελεστία, θέν συνεθίζονται δ' ἡ ἐπιχυσίς τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ τῆς λαγίνου ἢ θραύσις.

⁴ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed. 1891. τ. i. c. 483-4.

The present Greek custom is to break clay vessels upon the grave, and also, as the remains pass out, in front of the dead man's house. Sometimes the same thing goes on along the whole road followed by the funeral. Nearly everywhere in Greece the instant the dead is lowered into the grave the officiating priest, while pronouncing the words, "*Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return,*"¹ pours water upon the grave from a vessel specially brought for the rite. This done the vessel is instantly broken while the priest flings with it upon the grave a handful of earth. The mourners and bystanders at a funeral all deem it their religious duty to throw earth upon the dead, saying "*May God forgive him (or her).*" Thus they, without knowing it, conform to the practice inculcated by immemorial custom upon the ancient Greeks, whereby they were bound to strew earth upon any whom they saw unburied.² It is noteworthy that this religious rite, which no Greek priest would think of omitting, has never received the sanction of the Church, and is nowhere mentioned or provided for in the funeral service.³

Dr. Edward Tylor, to whose remarkable learning we owe proofs of the existence of similar customs among various Asiatic, African, American, and Australian peoples, offers many well considered hypotheses to account for the firm footing of these customs in popular beliefs.⁴ In Greece, when priests or enlightened laymen are questioned about the meaning of this custom which they adhere to as a religious rite, their answer is that it symbolizes the dissolution of the soulless body into earth and water, its component elements. I believe, however, that its real or whole meaning can best be inferred after comparison with beliefs and customs of a similar kind elsewhere. A careful scrutiny of these justifies the inference that this practice of

¹ Genesis iii, 19.

² See among others Ælian, *Var. Hist.* v, 14.

³ The only place known to me where the pouring out of the water and the breaking of the vessel are omitted from the rite, otherwise punctiliously observed, is Gortynia, in the Peloponnesus.

⁴ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed. 1891, vol. i, 483 f.

τῆς ἀναβολῆς πρὸς ἄλλα παραπλήσια καὶ τὰς συναφεῖς αὐτοῖς δοξαστάς. Ἐξετάζοντες δὲ μετ' ἐξοπτάσεως ταῦτα, συνάγομεν ὅτι δύο ἦσαν αἱ κυρίαί ἰδέαι ἐξ ὧν προήλθε τὸ ἔθιμον τῆς θραύσεως τῶν ἀγγείων. Α'. Ἡ ἰδέα ὅτι πᾶν τὸ χρησιμεῦσαν πρὸς καθαρμούς πρέπει νὰ καταστραφῆ, ὅπως μὴ βεβηλωθῆ δι ἄλλης χρήσεως, καὶ μειωθῆ οὕτως ἢ τῶν καθαρμῶν ἐνέργεια· καὶ Β' ὅτι τὰ φιερωμένα εἰς τοὺς νεκροὺς πρέπει ἐπίσης νὰ καταστρέφονται ὅπως ἐξασφαλίζηται τῆς ἀφιερώσεως ὁ σκοπός, ὅστις θὰ ἐματαιοῖτο ἂν τυχὸν ἐγίνετο ἄλλη τις χρῆσις αὐτῶν. Ὡς δὲ τὰ ἐπὶ τοῦ τάφου ἐναγίζόμενα ἔμψυχα ἰπετίθετο ὅτι διὰ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ καθίσταντο ὑπηρετικά τῷ τιμωμένῳ νεκρῷ, οὕτω καὶ τὰ σκεύη ἐπίσης ὑπολαμβάνόμενα παρὰ τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν λαοῖς, πρέπει νὰ καταστραφῶσι, ἵνα χρησιμεύσωσιν αὐτῷ, ἀνεπτήδεια ὄντα πρὸς πᾶσαν ἄλλην χρῆσιν.

Ὡς πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον παρατηροῖμεν ὅτι καὶ νῦν, καθὼς τὰ πάλαι, συνειθίζονται καθαρμοὶ κατὰ τὰς κηδείας, καὶ ἐν μὲν τοῖς ἀρχαίοις χρόνοις οἱ ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ πενθοῦντος ἀφικνούμενοι ἐκαθαίροντο κατὰ τὴν ἔξοδον περιρραϊνόμενοι ὕδατι τοῦτο δὲ προῦκειτο ἐν ἀγγείοις κεραμεῖω ἐξ ἄλλης οἰκίας κεκομισμένοι, τὸ δ' ἀγγεῖον ἐκαλεῖτο ἀρδάνιον¹. Νῦν ἐν πλείστοις Ἑλληνικοῖς τόποις ἡ κάθαρσις γίνεται κατὰ τὴν ἐπάνοδον ἀπὸ τῆς κηδείας, συνισταμένη εἰς νίψιν τῶν χειρῶν τῶν μετασχόντων αὐτῆς, ἥτις ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον γίνεται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ νεκροῦ². Ἐν Κύπρῳ δὲ κατ' ἐξαιρέσιν νίπτουσι τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ

¹ Πολυδεύκης, ἡ, 65.—Σχολ. Ἀριστοφ. Νεφ. 838: «ἔθος ἦν μετὰ τὸ ἐκκομισθῆναι τὸ σῶμα καθαρμοῦ χάριν ἀπολούεσθαι τοὺς οἰκείους τοῦ τεθνεώτος.»—Ἠσύχιος, λ. ἀρδάνιον· «τὸ ἀρδάνιον ἐτίθετο πρὸ τῆς θύρας τῆς οἰκίας,» Ἀριστοφάν. Ἐκκλησιάζ. 1033.—Βλ. καὶ Hermann-Blümner, *op. cit.* p. 365.—Περὶ ὁμοίων καθαρμῶν παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις βλ. Bekker, *Gallus*, τ. iii. c. 378.

² Κοραῖ, Ἀτακτα, τ. β. c. 404 κέ.—Ἰω. Πρωτοδίκου, Περὶ τῆς παρ ἡμῖν ταφῆς, Ἀθ. 1860, c. 13.—Ὁ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ἑλλ. φιλολ. σὺλ λογος, τ. ιθ'. c. 139 (ἐν Τζεσμέ τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας).—Ἐξ ἰδίων δὲ πληροφοριῶν γινώσκουμεν ὅτι τοῦτο συνειθίζεται καὶ ἐν Γορτυνίᾳ, Ἀθήναις, Τριχωνίᾳ καὶ ἐν τισὶ τῶν Κυκλάδων.—Ὅμοίως ἐν τισὶ τῶν χωρίων τῆς Γαλλίας, οἱ ἐπανερχόμενοι ἐκ κηδείας, νίπτουσι τὰς χεῖρας, τὸ δὲ μᾶκτρον δι' οὗ πάντες σπογγίζονται ρίπτουσιν εἰς τὴν στέγην (Noel, *Coutumes, mythes, et traditions des provinces de France*, c. 94). Ὅθεν καὶ ἐνταῦθα

breaking vessels is based upon two leading notions or preoccupations. (a.) That everything used in the ritual of purification ought to be destroyed lest the efficacy of the purificatory act be annulled through the profane use afterwards of things employed in its performance. (b.) That objects given to the dead must be destroyed, to guard against the possibility of their use for other purposes which annuls their dedication to the dead. Just as animals sacrificed upon graves are believed by primitive man to become, by their death, serviceable to the departed, so all chattels (which were also naïvely endowed with a life of their own) must perish by fracture or mutilation of some kind in order to serve the dead man's purposes, becoming through such mutilation unfit for living use.

With regard to (a), the first of these notions, we observe that now, as of old, purifications are a part of the funeral ritual. Among the ancients all who visited the house of mourning, were purified on issuing out of it by water, which was sprinkled upon them out of an earthen vessel brought from another house. This vessel was called *ἀρδάνιον*.¹ Nowadays, in a great many parts of Greece, this purification takes place after the funeral is over, and for the most part its rites are observed in the house of the dead, whither the mourners return.² In Cyprus, by way of exception, the washing of the hands takes place over the open

¹ *Pollux*, viii, 65. *Scho. in Aristoph. Nub.*, 838: "It was a custom after the dead had been borne to the grave for his whole household to wash themselves by way of purification. *Hesychius*, s. v. *ἀρδάνιον*: the vessel of purification (*ἀρδάνιον*) was placed in front of the house. Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazousae*, 1033. See also Hermann-Blümner, *op. cit.*, p. 365. For equivalent purificatory rites at Rome, see Bekker's *Gallus*, vol. iii, p. 378.

² Koraë's *Miscellanies*, vol. ii, p. 404ff. J. Protodikos, *Our Funeral Rites*, Athens (1860), p. 13. Publications of the *Greek Philological Association* at Constantinople, vol. xix, p. 139, mention the ritual at *Tzesme* in Asia Minor. I know from private sources that this is the ritual observed at Gortynia, Athens, Trichonia, and in several of the Cyclades. The same holds good in certain districts of France; people on returning from a funeral wash their hands, and the towel used to wipe them is summarily disposed of (Noël, *Coutumes, mythes et traditions des provinces des France*, p. 94). Here again we can discern anxiety to prevent any profane employment of what has served for a rite of purification.

τάφου, θραυσμένων εἴτα τῶν λαγήνων τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ τοῦ πρὸς ἄλλον σκοπὸν νομιζομένου ἐλαιοδόχου ἀγγείου¹.

Ἐν Αἴνῳ δὲ τῆς Θράκης νίπτονται ἐπὶ τοῦ μνήματος πάντες οἱ συνοδεύσαντες τὴν κηδείαν, τοῦτο δὲ ποιοῦσιν ὡς λέγουσιν «ἵνα μὴ βλέπωσι τὸν νεκρὸν καθ' ὕπνον².» Σαφῶς δ' ἐμφαίνεται ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ καθαρμοῦ ἐν τοῖς Ἀρκαδικοῖς ἐθίμοις τῆς θραύσεως τῶν ὑδριῶν κατὰ τὴν διάβασιν τῆς νεκρικῆς πομπῆς, ἣν ἀλλαγῶς ἀλλῶς ἐζηροῦσιν ὡς κατωτέρω θὰ ἴδωμεν. Ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις χωρίοις τῆς Ἀρκαδίας καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Τριπόλει λέγουσιν ὅτι «ἅμα προσπεράσῃ τὸ λείψανον, πρέπει ἀμέσως νὰ πάρῃς ἓνα κανάτο ἢ νιὰ (= μίαν) στάμνον ἢ νιὰ λαίηνα (= λάγνηνον) γεμάτην νερὸν καὶ νὰ τὸ χιούσῃς ἀπὸ τῆς νιὰς ἄκρῃ τοῦ δρόμου ἄς ᾗς τὴν ἄλλην ἢ χάμου ᾗς τὰ γκωνάρι τοῦ σπιτιοῦ σοῦ ἢ μπροστὰ ᾗς τὴν πόρτα σοῦ μὲ οὐλο τὰ γγειῖο ἢ μέσα ᾗς ταῖς τέσσεραῖς ἀγκωνᾶς τοῦ σπιτιοῦ καὶ νὰ σπᾷσῃς τὰ γγειῖο καὶ νὰ εἴπῃς: Διὸς (= θεὸς) εἴ χωρέεῃς τὸν κακὸν τοῦ νὰ μὴ μάς βρῆ.» Ἐνίοτε οἱ δεισιδαιμονέστεροι χύνουσιν ὄλον τὸ ὅπουδήποτε τῆς οἰκίας ὑπάρχον ὕδωρ, ἐὰν τύχῃ καὶ διέλθῃ λείψανον πρὸς τὴν οἰκίαν, διότι ἐν τοιαύτῃ περιπτώσει «τὸ νερὸν εἶναι θράσιο (= θρασύ), ἢτοι ἀκάθαρτον, ἄχρηστον, μίασμα τῆς οἰκίας, καὶ πρέπει διὰ τοῦτο νὰ χυθῇ ἀμέσως, ἵνα καθαρισθῇ ἡ οἰκία, «γιατὶ σκουληκιάζει τὸ νερὸν» ὅταν διέλθῃ τὸ λείψανον. Ἐπίσης χύνουσι τὸ ὕδωρ «γιατὸ καλὸν» ἢ «γιατὸ νὰ παστρεύτῃ τὸ σπῆτι³.»

Ἐκ δὲ τῆς δευτέρας τῶν ἀναγραφείσων ἰδεῶν ἀπορρέουσι πολλὰι συνήθειαι μαρτυροῦσαι τὴν πεποιθῆσιν τοῦ λαοῦ, ὅτι τὸ ἐν ταῖς θραυσμέναις λαγήνοισι ὕδωρ εἶναι πρωπριομένον διὰ τὸν νεκρὸν, καὶ ὅτι ἡ χύσις τοῦ ὕδατος εἰς τὴν γῆν καὶ ἡ καταστροφὴ τοῦ περιέχοντος αὐτὸ ἀγγείου θεωροῦνται ὡς οἱ κ' ταλ-
διαβλέπομεν προσπάθειαν πρὸς παρανάλυσιν τῆς βεβήλου χρήσεως τοῦ χρησι-
μεύσαντος εἰς καθαρμόν.

¹ Γ. Λουκά, Φιλολογικαὶ ἐπισκέψεις, Ἄθ. 1874, σ. 98.—Ἄθ. Σακελλαρίον, Κυπριακά, Ἄθ. 1890, τ. 1. σ. 738.

² Ὁ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ἑλλ. φιλολ. σύλλογος, τ. 1. σ. 549.

³ Κατ' ἀνακοίνωσιν τοῦ Ἀρκάδος κ. Α. Σ. Ἀβανιτοπούλου.

grave. The water-jars are then immediately broken, together with the oil-jar brought there for a different purpose.¹

At Aenos in Thrace all who have followed the procession to the grave wash themselves there. The reason they give for so doing is "In order not to see the dead man in their dreams."² But an idea of purification is obviously embodied in this custom as well as in the Arcadian custom of breaking jars while the funeral goes by. This is variously explained in various localities as will be shewn below. In most Arcadian country places, and even in Tripolitza itself, the injunction is "As soon as the remains come by your door, take a jug full of water, or a jar or some vessel, straightway empty this, pouring it from one end of the street to the other, or else empty it on the cornerstone of your house or pour it out in front of your door, or halfway between the four corners of your house. Break the vessel thus emptied and say, "*May God forgive him (or her) and may the harm that fell on him not find us.*"

• Sometimes those who are especially superstitious throw out all the water that may be stored anywhere in the house when a corpse happens to be borne past, and the reason given in such a case is "that the water is rough," that is impure, useless,—a pollution to the house, and must therefore immediately be thrown away that the house may be purified, "for water breeds worms," if left in a house after a corpse has gone past. Or again they account for their pouring out the "water because it makes things right," or "to get the house clean."³

From (b), the second of the two notions mentioned above, spring various customs which bear testimony to the fixed popular belief that the water held by these broken vessels was an offering to the dead, and that the pouring out of it on the earth, together with the breaking of the vessel holding it, is the most effectual way for bringing the dead into possession of their own. The

¹ G. Louka, *Philological Essays*, Athens (1874), p. 98. A. Sakellariou, *Cypriote Studies*, Athens (1890), vol. i, p. 738.

² See vol. viii, p. 549, of the *Proceedings of the Greek Philological Society of Constantinople*.

³ On the authority of Mr. A. S. Abanitopoulos, an Arcadian.

ηλότατοι τρόποι ὅπως λάβῃ τὸ προσφερόμενον ὁ νεκρός. Ὡς καὶ παρὰ τοῖς πλείστοις λαοῖς, ἀκμαία διατηρεῖται καὶ παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν ἡ δοξασία περὶ ἐπιβίωσης τῶν νεκρῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἡ παρεπομένη τῇ δοξασίᾳ ταύτῃ συνήθεια τῆς προφορᾶς τροφῶν εἰς αὐτούς. Πολλαχοῦ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐξακολουθοῦσιν ἐναγίζοντες τοῖς νεκροῖς, ὡς ἐν ἄλλῳ τόπῳ διαλαμβανόμεν¹. Ἐνταῦθα δ' ἀρκούμεθα ν' ἀναφέρωμεν ὅτι ἐν ταῖς πλείσταῖς Ἑλληνικαῖς χώραις ἐπὶ τρία ἡμερονύκτα ἀνάπτουσιν ἐν τῷ δωματίῳ ὅπου ἐξεψύχσεν ὁ νεκρὸς ἀκοίμητον λίχνον καὶ παραθέτους ἄρτους καὶ λάγνηνον πλήρη ὕδατος². Ἐν Κρήτῃ ἀποτίθεται ἐπὶ τοῦ τάφου λάγνηνος ὕδατος καὶ ἀφίεται ἐκεῖ ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα διότι δοξάζουσιν ὅτι κατὰ τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ νεκροῦ περιφερομένη εἰς τοὺς τόπους εἰς οὓς ζῶν παρευρέθη πίνει ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐκείνου ἐπανερχομένη τὴν ἐσπέραν³. Ἐνιαχοῦ ὁμως λησμονηθείσας τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἐθίμου ἐπλάσθη ἄλλη δικαιολογία, ὅτι δηλαδὴ τὸ ἀργεῖον τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ θανόντος χρῆσιμεῦει ὅπως πέσει μέσα ὁ διάβολος, ὁ ὁποῖος «γίνεται σὰν μῦγα καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ πεδαμίου»⁴. Ἡ ὅτι διὰ τοῦ κρότου τῶν θραυσμένων ἀργείων ἐκδιώκονται οἱ δαίμονες, ὅσοι περιτρέχουσα ζητούντες να κύρωσι διὰ τῆς βίας εἰς τὴν κόλασιν τὴν ψυχὴν⁵. Ἐν Τριπόλει δὲ καὶ ἐν πολλοῖς χωρίοις τῆς Μαντινείας πιστεύουσιν ὅτι ταγγεῖα θραύονται πρὸς ἐκφόβησιν τοῦ Χάρου καὶ ἀποτροπὴν αὐτοῦ. Συνειθίζουσιν ἐκεῖ κατὰ τὴν ἐκφορὰν τοῦ

¹ Παρθενῶν, Ἀθ. 1872, τ. ii. σ. 143.

² Χ. Μεγδάνου, Λύχνος Διογένους, 1818, σ. 273 (Μακεδονία). Ὅτι τὸ ἐθίμον τοῦτο κρατεῖ πολλαχοῦ τῆς Ἑλλάδος γινώσκομεν ἐξ ἰδίας ἀντιλήψεως.

³ Bybilakis, Neugriechisches Leben, σ. 67.—Πανδώρα, 1876, τ. xvii. σ. 331.

⁴ Κατ' ἀνακοίνωσιν τοῦ Κυρίου Γ. Δροσίη.—Παραπλησία πρόληψις ἐπικρατεῖ πολλαχοῦ τῆς Γαλλίας, ὅπου κενούσι πάντα ταγγεῖα ἵνα μὴ πέσῃ εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ πιγῆ ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ τεθνεώτος. (Βλ. Mélysine, τ. i. col. 97, 320, 456.)

⁵ Ἀντωνιάδου Κρητικῆς, σ. 346-7.—Ὅμοια ἐννοια ἀποδίδεται καὶ εἰς τὴν θραύσιν πηλίνων ἀργείων τὸ Μεγά Σάββατον, ἥτις καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ μὲν συνειθίζεται, ἐξαιρετικῶς δ' ἐν Κερκύρα.

Greeks are as firmly convinced, as are many other peoples, that the dead have a further lease of life upon earth. Hence the custom of making offerings of food to them. These offerings are commonly made in Greece as I have recorded at length elsewhere.¹ Let it only be noted here that in many places a light is kept burning for three consecutive days and nights in the chamber of the departed where bread as well as a jar of water is kept in readiness.² In Crete a jar full of water is deposited at the grave, where it is left for forty days, the belief being that during all that time the departed soul wanders over the haunts where it lived, and returns every evening to drink of the water provided.³ In some places, where the meaning of this custom has been lost sight of, other explanations have suggested themselves. The jar of water placed in the house of the dead is for the devil to fall into when "he comes in the form of a fly to take off the soul of the dead."⁴ Or else the noise of the breaking of the jar drives away the demons who hover around seeking violently to drag off the dead man's soul to torments.⁵

At Tripolis and in many Mantineian villages it is believed that the vases are broken to frighten Charon, and to keep him away. There it is customary for the more well-to-do to break a

¹ *Parthenon* (Athens, 1872), vol. ii, p. 143.

² Ch. Megdanou, *The Lantern of Diogenes*, 1818, p. 273, where Macedonia is spoken of. That this custom prevails widely in Greece I know from private sources of information.

³ Bybliakis, *Neugriechisches Leben*, p. 67. *Pandora* (1876), vol. xvii, p. 331.

⁴ This fact is kindly communicated by Mr. G. Drosines. An analogous presumption is made in many parts of France, where they empty all vessels in order that the soul of the departed may not run the risk of falling in and being drowned (see *Mélusine*, vol. i, col. 97, 320, 456).

⁵ Antoniadou, *Kreteïs*, p. 346 f. A similar significance is attached to the custom of breaking earthen pots as a part of the *Great Sabbath*. This is observed in many places, but most punctiliously at Corfu.

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νεκροῦ νὰ θραύωσιν, οἱ μὲν εὐπορώτεροι καινουργῆ ὑδρίαν ἢ λάγνηνον, οἱ δ' ἀπορώτεροι παλαιόν τι ἀγγεῖον ἢ ἀπλῶς κέραμον πρὸ γῆς θύρας τῆς οἰκίας, ἢ πρὸ τῆς θύρας τοῦ δωματίου ἐν ᾧ ἐτελεύτησεν ὁ νεκρός, ἢ ἐν ᾧ δωματίῳ ἐξελέχθη ἦτοι ἐν τῷ δωματίῳ τῶν εἰκονισμάτων. Τὸ ἀγγεῖον θραύει στενὸς συγγενὴς ἢ φίλος τοῦ θανόντος, συνηθέστατα δὲ γυνή, ἀλλὰ πρὸς βύτις, ἔχουσα ἡλικίαν ἄνω τῶν 50 ἐτῶν· εἰς νέον θέν ἐπιτρέπεται τοῦτο διότι οἱ νέοι εἶναι ἀνίσχυροι ἢ ἀντιμετωπίωσι τὸν Χάρον (« νὰ τὰ βαίουν μὲ τὸ Χάρο ») ἢ,—ὄπερ ἀληθέστερον,—διότι φοβούμενοι ἐκδίκησιν τοῦ Χάρου, προτιμῶσι νὰ ἐκθέσωσιν ἐς αὐτὴν πρὸς βύτην μᾶλλον ἢ νέον. Πιστεύουσι δὲ ὅτι ἡ θραύσις τοῦ ἀγγείου, ἐκφοβοῦσα τὸν Χάρον, ἐξασφαλίζει τὴν ζωὴν τῶν ἄλλων. Καὶ ἐπιλέγουσι θραύοντες τὸ ἀγγεῖον « Ἐνανε μᾶς ἐπῆρες, μωρὲ Χάρο, νάντοτος ! » (= ἰδοὺ αὐτός)—ἐνταῦθα θραύεται τὸ ἀγγεῖον—« ἄλλοι θέν μᾶς παίρνεις ! » ἢ « ὅπως σπάζει τὸ κεραμίδι, ἔτος, ρὲ Χάρο, νὰ σπάσῃ τὸ κεφάλι σου ἂν ζανάρθῃς ! » (ἢ « ἂν ζανάρθῃς ἔτος τὸ σπῆτι μᾶς ! ») ἢ « σιδερένιοι νὰ εἶσατε » (ἢ « νὰ εἶματε ! ») ἢ « Νὰ ἔναι σιδερένιοι οἱ πικινοί ! » ἢ « Ἐνος ἐχάθη, οἱ ἄλλοι σιδερένιοι ! » (ὑπονοεῖται « ἄς εἶναι »). Λέγουσι δ' ὅτι θραύουσι τὸ ἀγγεῖον « γιὰ νὰ σκιάζουνε τὸ Χάρο, » ἢ « Νάν τ' ἀκούσῃ ὁ Χάρος καὶ νὰ μὴν ζανάρθῃ, » ἢ « νὰ μὴ σώσῃ νάρθῃ πλιά ὁ Χάρος, » ἢ « γιὰ νὰ μὴν ζανάρθῃ ὁ Χάρος, » ἢ « νὰ μὴ σώσῃ πλιά νάρθῃ καὶ ἄλλη βολὰ ἔτος τὸ σπῆτι μᾶς, » ἢ « γιὰ νὰ μὴν τοῦ περνᾷ πλιά, » ἢ « νὰ ξεσπάσῃ τὸ κακὸ ἔτος τὸ κεφάλι τοῦ Χάρου, » ἢ « γιὰ νὰ φύγῃ τὸ κακὸ ἀπὸ τὸ σπῆτι μᾶς, » ἢ « γιὰ νὰ μὴ μᾶς ζαναίρῃ τὸ κακὸ, » ἢ « γιὰ νὰ ζήσουνε οἱ ἄλλοι, » ἢ « γιὰ νὰ μὴν πεθάνῃ ἄλλος, » ἢ « γιὰ νὰ μείνουνε οἱ ἀποκέλοιποι, » ἢ « γιὰ νὰ ἔναι οἱ ἄλλοι γεροί. »¹

¹ Κατ' ἀνακοίνωσιν τοῦ Κ. Α. Σ. Ἀβανιτοπούλου, ἕτεροι τρόποι πρὸς ἐκφόβησιν τοῦ Χάρου κατὰ τὰς κηδείας συνηθίζονται οἱ ἐξεῖς ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ ἐνίοτε θραύουσι τὸ καλαμίδι ἢ καλάμι τοῦ ἀργαλειοῦ· κάλαμον μῆκος 1½ μετρήσιν 2 πήχεων, ἐπιλέγοντες: « τὸ καλάμι τὸ σπάσῃς, μωρὲ Χάρο, μὰ τὸ σιδέρο θὰ μβορέσῃς, » ἢ « σιδερένιοι οἱ πικινοί. » Ἐνιαχοῦ δὲ τῆς Μαντινείας καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐν Τριπόλει κόπτουσι ἐκ τοῦ σαβάνου μακρὰν λωρίδα, ἢν ἀναρτῶσι πρὸ τῆς θύρας τῆς οἰκίας ἢ εἰς τὴν δοκὸν τῆς στέγης (εἰς τὸ

new jar or jug on the occasion of a funeral, while the poorer people will break an old vessel or only a tile, before the house door, the door of the death chamber, or even inside the room where the body is laid out, which is the one where the holy pictures are kept. The vase is broken by some near relation or friend of the dead, in most cases by a woman. But she must be rather old, over fifty as a rule. No young person may do it, "since the young have not the strength to measure themselves against Charon," some say. Others put it more plausibly by saying that it is for fear of Charon's revenge that an old person is preferred to a young one. This breaking of a vase is believed to inspire Charon with fear and thus to preserve the lives of the survivors. While in the act of breaking they say, "Thou hast taken one from us, oh Charon, thou numbskull, here he is,"—then they break the vase—"none other shalt thou take!" Or again: "As this tile breaks, oh Charon, so be broken thy head if thou comest again" (or, "if thou enterest afresh this house of ours"). Or again: "May we (or 'you') be of iron"! Or, "one is lost, be the others as iron!" (*i.e.*, the others shall be as strong as iron). The accounts popularly given of this breaking of pots and potsherds is that they do it "to frighten Charon," or "that Charon may hear the noise and not return," or "that he may not come again to this house," or "that he may not have his will another time," or "that the harm may be upon Charon's head," or "that the harm may fly from our house," or "that the harm may not find us again," or "that the others may live," "that no one else may die," "that the survivors may bide where they are," or "may be lusty and strong."¹

¹ I owe to Mr. A. S. Abanitopoulos the following record of Arcadian customs for terrifying Charon. Sometimes they break the rod of the loom which is from 1½ to 2 metres long, saying "this rod hast thou broken, Charon, thou numbskull, but iron shalt thou not break;" or, "may the survivors be as iron." In Tripolis, not to speak of parts of Mantinea, they cut long strips from the shroud and

Ἄλλὰ διὰ τὸ χεόμενον κατὰ γῆς ὕδωρ ζωηράν ἔχουσι τὴν συνείδησιν οἱ τὸ ἔθιμον τοῦτο τηροῦντες οἷς γίνεται διὰ τὰ δροσωθῆ ἢ ψυχὴ τοῦ νεκροῦ. Συνήθως ἢ λάγνητος τοῦ ὕδατος θραύεται παρὰ τὴν θύραν τῆς οἰκίας κατὰ τὴν ἔξοδον τοῦ νεκροῦ¹. Ἐν Χίῳ δοξάζουσι μὲν συμφώνας πρὸς τοὺς θρήνους τῆς νεκρωσίμου ἀκολουθίας ὅτι ἐπιπονώτατον ἀγῶνα καββάλλει ἢ ψυχὴ χωρισμένη τοῦ σώματος, πρὸς ἀνακούφισιν δ' αὐτῆς ῥίπτουσιν εἰς τὴν ὁδὸν πῆλινα ἀγγεῖα ὕδατος ὅταν ἐξαχθῆ τὸ λείψανον ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας, πλὴν δὲ τούτου πολλοὶ τῶν φίλων καὶ συγγενῶν ῥίπτουσι τοιαῦτα καὶ ὅταν διέρχεται ἢ πομπὴ πρὸ τῆς οἰκίας τῶν, διὰ τὰ δροσίουν «τὴν λαύρα τῆς ψυχῆς» τοῦ νεκροῦ². Ἐν Κύπρῳ δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἐκκομιδὴν τοῦ νεκροῦ χύνουσιν ὄθεν καὶ ἂν διέρχεται ἢ νεκρικὴ πομπὴ πρὸς ἀνακούφισιν τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ νεκροῦ ὕδωρ καθαρὸν ἐκ πηλίων ἀγγείων, ἅπερ ἀμέσως ῥίπτοντες χαμαὶ συντρίβουσι³. Συνειθίζουσι προσέτι αὐτόθι τὰ ἐκχέωσιν εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς κάτοπιν τοῦ νεκροῦ καὶ ὅλον τὸ ἐν ταῖς ὑδρίαις τοῦ οἴκου ἀποτεταμιευμένον ὕδωρ πιστεύοντες ὅτι ἔχει μιανθῆ διότι ἀπέπλυνεν ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν αἰμοστάγην μάχαιραν, δι' ἧς ἀπέκτεινεν τὸν νεκρὸν ὁ Χάρων ἢ ὁ ψυχοπομπὸς Ἄγγελος⁴.

Δηλονότι παρέχεται οὕτω καὶ ἄλλη, μυθολογικὴ αὐτή, ἐξήγησις τοῦ ἔθιμου, ἣτις ὁμῶς ἐπισκοτίζει τὴν κοινῶς κρατοῦσαν δόξαν, ὅτι τὸ ὕδωρ εἶναι προσφορὰ πρὸς τὸν νεκρὸν καὶ ὅτι ἐπομένως ἢ θραύσις τῶν ἀγγείων σκοπεῖ τὴν ἐξασφάλισιν τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ νεκροῦ χρήσεως τῆς προσφορᾶς ταύτης.

πάτερο) «γὰ τὰ δέσουε τὸ Χάρο ἂν ζυνάρθη,» πιστεύοντες ὅτι ὁ Χάρων, ἂν θελήσῃ τὰ ἐπανάλθῃ ὅπως ἀποκτείνῃ ἄλλον τινὰ ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς οἰκίας, βλέπων τὸ προπριωμένον πρὸς δέσιμον αὐτοῦ σχοινίον θὰ φοβηθῆ καὶ θὰ φυγῆ.

¹ Rouqueville, *Voyage de la Grèce*, 1827, τ. vi. c. 147.—Πρωτόδικος, *op. cit.* c. 13.—Τὸ ἔθιμον παρετηρήθη ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐν Ἀθήναις καὶ πολλαχοῦ τῆς Πελοποννήσου.

² Κ. Κανελλάκη, Χιανὰ Ἀναλέκτα, Ἀθῆν. 1890, c. 338.

³ Σαγγάριος, *op. cit.*

⁴ Λουκάς, *op. cit.* c. 97.

As to the water spilled upon the ground, all who keep up this observance are absolutely firm in their faith that it refreshes the departed. Usually a vessel is broken at the house door as the body is carried out.¹ On the island of Chios there is a literal understanding of the lamentations which form part of the funeral service attributing to the soul feelings of poignant agony during the struggle which parts it from the body. By way of relief they empty jars of water upon the ground at the moment when the funeral moves away from the house. Moreover many friends and kinsmen of the departed, when the procession passes their doors, empty vessels of water into the street in order to ease the burning pains of the dead.² In Cyprus, all along the road taken by the funeral pure water is thrown upon the ground for the relief of the dead, and the jars containing it are flung down and broken when emptied.³ Another Cypriote custom requires that all the water standing in houses passed by the funeral should be thrown away. The belief is that Charon or the Summoning Angel of the dead (*ἄγγελος ψυχοπομπός*)⁴ has polluted all such standing water by washing in it the blood-stained knife used to slay the dead.

This mythological explanation of the custom does not, however, supersede the generally prevailing belief that the water is an offering to the dead and that the breaking of the vessels assures the sole use of the offering to the departed.

hang them over the door or from the main roof-beam, in order to bind Charon with it, if he tries to come again. They believe instead of making a new victim in the house, he will see this and begone in fear and trembling.

¹ Pouqueville, *Voyage de la Grece*, 1827, vol. vi, p. 147. Protodikos, *op. cit.*, p. 13. I have myself witnessed this observance at Athens and in many parts of the Peloponnesus.

² K. Kanellakes, *Chiote Miscellanies*, 1890, p. 338.

³ Sangarios, *op. cit.*

⁴ Loukas, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

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